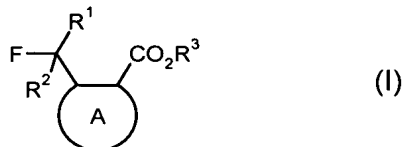


AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Claims 1-17 (canceled)

Claim 18 (currently amended): A process for preparing fluoromethyl-substituted heterocycles of formula (I)



in which

R¹ is hydrogen, fluorine, or chlorine,

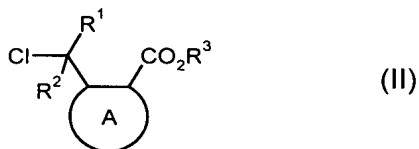
R² is hydrogen, fluorine, or chlorine,

R³ is C₁-C₆-alkyl,

A is a 5-membered heterocycle selected from the group consisting of pyrazole that is substituted by R⁴ in the 1-position, ~~thiazole that is substituted by R⁴ in the 2-position, and oxazole that is substituted by R⁴ in the 2-position,~~ and

R⁴ is C₁-C₄-alkyl, C₃-C₆-cycloalkyl, C₁-C₄-alkylthio-C₁-C₄-alkyl, C₁-C₄-alkoxy-C₁-C₄-alkyl, or phenyl,

comprising converting a chloromethyl-substituted heterocycle of formula (II)



in which R¹, R², R³, and A are each as defined for formula (I),
to a fluoromethyl-substituted heterocycle of formula (I) in the presence of a fluorinating agent and optionally in the presence of a diluent.

Claim 19 (currently amended): A process according to Claim 18 wherein for the chloromethyl-substituted heterocycle of formula (II),

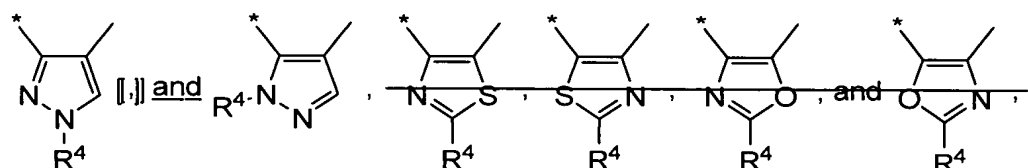
R¹ is hydrogen, fluorine, or chlorine,

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R² is hydrogen, fluorine, or chlorine,

R³ is C₁-C₄-alkyl,

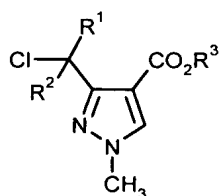
A is a 5-membered heterocycle selected from the group consisting of



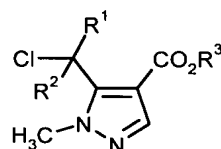
where in each case the bond marked by * is joined to the -CClR¹R² group and the other bond is joined to the CO₂R³ ester group, and

R⁴ is methyl, ethyl, n-propyl, isopropyl, cyclopropyl, cyclopentyl, cyclohexyl, or phenyl.

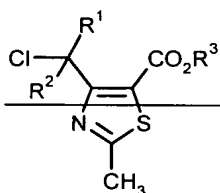
Claim 20 (currently amended): A process according to Claim 18 wherein the chloromethyl-substituted heterocycle of formula (II) is selected from the group consisting of compounds of formulas (II-a) [[.]] and (II-b) [[.]] ~~(II-c), and (II-d)~~



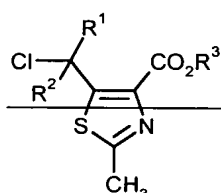
(II-a), and



(II-b),



~~(II-c), and~~



~~(II-d),~~

in which R¹, R², and R³ are as defined in Claim 18.

Claim 21 (previously presented): A process according to Claim 20 in which R¹ is chlorine, R² is hydrogen, and R³ is methyl or ethyl.

Claim 22 (previously presented): A process according to Claim 18 wherein the fluorinating agent is an alkali metal fluoride, cobalt(III) fluoride, halogen fluoride, anti-mony fluoride, molybdenum fluoride, hydrogen fluoride, hydrogen fluoride/pyridine

mixture, a tertiary ammonium hydrofluoride, or a trialkylamine hydrofluoride of the formula $n \text{ HF} / \text{N}(\text{Alk})_3$ in which n is 1, 2, or 3, and Alk is $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_4$ -alkyl.

Claim 23 (previously presented): A process according to Claim 18 wherein the fluorinating agent is $3 \text{ HF} / \text{N}(\text{Et})_3$ (Franz reagent), $3 \text{ HF} / \text{N}(\text{n-Bu})_3$, or HF/pyridine (Olah's reagent).

Claim 24 (previously presented): A process according to Claim 18 wherein the fluorinating agent is $3 \text{ HF} / \text{N}(\text{Et})_3$ (Franz reagent) or $3 \text{ HF} / \text{N}(\text{n-Bu})_3$.

Claim 25 (previously presented): A process according to Claim 18 that it is carried out at a temperature of 80°C to 170°C .

Claim 26 (previously presented): A process according to Claim 18 that it is carried out at a temperature of 120°C to 150°C .

Claims 27-33 (canceled)